

## Lesson #70 U.S. History

### The Great War 1916

Each side was planning on end the war with one deceive battle and a “Break Through”. The Germans at Verdun beginning on the Kaiser’s birthday.

**Battle of Verdun** 7:15 a.m. February 21, open with a 10-hour artillery bombardment.

Had a 20 miles front “Turning Point of War” Code Name “Gericht” = “tribunal” or judgement” at time “execution place”

General Enrich von Falkenhayn “Bled White” – pushed for unrestricted U-boat warfare. Crown Prince 5<sup>th</sup> army – lost power when Ludendorff under mined him

German generals split into “Westerners” saw the war won in France and Falkenhayn and “Easterners” that the war would be won in Russia with Ludendorff.

By 1916 the Kaiser interfered less and less as battle continued, he moved into optimistic illusion

The Verdun Fort is 160 miles east of Paris

The Germans enter the battle with 1200 guns

500 heavies 13 were 420 mm “Big Bertha’s” mortars “Gamma Guns” - 17” caliber tall as a man / 1 ton, 172 pieces to carry on 12 wagons / 20 hours to setup / would break windows 2 miles away. There were 380 mm long barreled guns 15” caliber and 130 mm “whizz-bang” flat trajectory.

In 5 months 23 million shells fired = 1,350,000 tons of steel

One German Corp ; 6,000 wire cutters

17,000 spades

125,000 hand-grenades

1,000,000 sandbags

265,000 kilometers or barbed wire

1,220 artillery –

Command had a strong belief that heavy guns would open other side to the infantry.

French orders of Day “You have a mission of sacrifice...it is your duty to fall.”

General Petain = cautious “cannon conquers, infantry occupies” “They shall not pass!”

He was from the lower class – slow in advancement – held bond with men – not soft – loss of men had to have a reason not – attrition – advocate fire power – Capt. Charles de Gaulle student of Petain. Captain Charles De Gaulle was captured at Verdun

“One does not fight with men against material; it is with material served by men that one makes war.”

General Ferdinand Foch – attack early “Will to Conquer” (Attack -Attack – Attack) at times without artillery support.

France was the only Republic in the war and was less Democratic

Monthly Losses:

	<b>French</b>	<b>German</b>
Feb.	24,000	25,363
March	65,000	56,244
April	42,000	38,299
May	59,000	54,309
June	67,000	51,567
July	31,000	25,969
Aug.	27,000	30,572

- Dec. 1916 used “Green Cross Gas” phosgene gas
- Flame-thrower 1<sup>st</sup> used – death trap for the man to wear it.
- First real air force
- \* “creeping barrage” artillery shelling move forward as the troops advance

- German 1. Weakness did not plan for weather – mud slow advance of artillery  
2. Slow start – cautiousness did not take advantage of French when weakest

1870 France lost for defensive posture after defeat at Sedan. The lost Alsace-Lorraine (industrial center) gave way to a line of Forts with key at Verdun.

1914 France cost for offensive posture – Verdun gave to impression that forts could hold out against overwhelming odds.

Sergeant Andre Maginot fought at Verdun and believed the forts saved France and proposed the Maginot Line in 1920.

1946 630 explosive men have been killed disarming 18 million artillery shells, 10 million grenades, 600,000 aerial bombs and 600,000 underwater mines.

1995 at Verdun 12 million shells unexploded in area – since

The French Army was pressed and needed relief of the pressure at Verdun. The British were ready with their new “Pal Battalions”. These were where men could join up with your “Pal’s” Friends, teammates, family members and fight along side them. To relive the pressure on the French the British pushed up the offensive date.

This was the year that both sides were supplied with the materials to make true Killing Fields.

## **Battle of Somme** July 1, 1916 @7:30 a.m. / 18-mile front

General Douglas Haig open battle to relieve pressure on the French at Verdun and used 1,437 guns to fire 1,508,652 shell in 7 days of bombardment. British generals rejected negative information from front lines on effect of bombardment and still did not react until 1 hour after battle started.

There were 66,000 Tommie's (British soldiers) 84 battalions climbed out of the trenches in the first 2 hours 1/3 made it to the German trenches. They were told to walk across "No-Man's" land the enemy artillery would have been wiped out in first trenches.

By the second hour of the attack 30,000 men were dead or wounded and the generals refused to change the Plan. Artillery was dropping behind the enemy lines when 43 fresh battalions sent over the Top. First 4 hours of the attack the cost was British 60,000 men / 21,000 killed, 35,000 wounded, 17,758 missing.

Germans fell back and still held the High Ground. The Germans knew the attack was coming newspaper report in England.

1. Factories postponed holiday
2. Increased activity in Somme area
3. French need for relief at Verdun
4. Five-day bombardment (expanded to 7 days)
5. Tap into British phone line to C and C HQ.

Hitler fought on the Somme as a runner – one regiment lost 21 runners in 3 hours

Battle over on Nov. 14, 1916 (140 days)

Douglas Haig was made Field Marshal – he did not go to the Front because he could not stand the death!

British had unwritten orders not to take prisoners for it would slow down advance.

	German	British	French
July	103,000	158,736	49,859
Aug.	68,000	58,085	76,147
Sept.	140,000	101,313	76,000
Oct.	78,000	57,722	37,626
Nov.	45,000	39,784	20,129

There was no chance for Peace after 1916 cost was now to high

“gott mit uns” = “God with us”

<u>1915 losses</u>	<b>German</b> 873,248	<b>British</b> 296,583	<b>French</b> 1,624,000
<u>1916</u>	1,192,451	643,246	876,000
<u>1917</u>	958,467	817,790	569,000

The “Pal Battalions” had families and villages losing fathers, husbands, brothers, finances and others in just four hours of battle. Family and friends joined together and fought together.

## The War at Sea:

<b>1900</b>	Navies	
	British	330 war ships
	France	95 war ships
	Russia	86 war ships
	Germany	68 war ships

In 1912 shells fired at 7,000 yards hit target only 42% of time

### 1914

	British	Germans
Dreadnoughts	28	16
Battle Cruisers	9	5
Armored Cruisers	8	0
Light Cruisers	26	11
Destroyers	72	61

Aug. 1914 = Magdeburg and found a dead radioman with his German code book.  
Room 40 (code room)

Sept. 1914 the U-9 sank 3 armored cruisers on the English coast

Aug. 1914 = Magdeburg and found a dead radioman with his German code book.  
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### Battle of Jutland 1916 May 31 – June 1,

	<u>British Lost</u>	<u>German Lost</u>
Battle Cruisers	3	1
Armor Cruisers	3	-
Old Battleships	-	1
Light Cruisers	-	4
Destroys	8	5
Men	6,094	2,551

Major lost ship of British count for most of the British loss of life:

*HMS Vincible*

*HMS Queen Mary*

*HMS Indefatigable*

Both sides claimed victory – Britain lost more ship and men and Germans retreated back to home port and never came back out to fight the British surface fleet again.

The war started with a U-boat that would surface and warned ships they would be sunk and allowed crews to get to lift-boats. The British armed ships and offered reward for ramming U-boats. U-boat tactics shifted to sinking without warnings. British then claimed the Germans were barbaric and sinking without warning.

Between 1914 -1918 German U-boats sank 2,000 warships and merchant ships and 578 fishing boats with the loss of 178 U-boats sunk.